

REMARKS

Claim 1 has been amended. New claim 10 has been added. Thus, claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 10 are pending in the present application. Support for the amendment to claim 1 may be found in the specification (US Patent Publication No. 2006/0210785) at page 13, paragraph [0157]. Support for new claim 10 may be found in the specification at Examples 1-7 and in Table 6. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the present rejections in view of the comments presented herein are respectfully requested.

Prior art rejections

Claims 1, 3, 7 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Chang et al. (US 7,120,342) in view of Mauk et al. (US 6,166,094); and claims 4 and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Chang et al., and further in view of Mauk et al., and further in view of Hiroshi et al. (JP 08-325401, and machine translation thereof).

Claim 1 as amended recites that a mean light reflectance of the sheet relative to incident light within a wavelength range of 320 to 800 nm is 80% or more, which is neither disclosed nor suggested by any of the cited references, either alone or in combination. As described in the present specification at page 3, paragraph [0028], “[t]he present invention allows the production of a light reflector that has microcells, is thin and has high reflection efficiency as well as satisfactory workability, productivity and formability.” The presently claimed method results in a foam sheet that has microcells and can easily be made to be thin and have multiple layers so as to achieve the recited mean light reflectance. The cited references suggest no mechanism that would enable one having ordinary skill in the art to achieve these recited levels of mean light reflectance. Thus, the cited references fail to provide sufficient teaching to produce a *prima facie* showing of obviousness.

Moreover, one having ordinary skill in the art would not have had any reason to combine the references in the manner suggested by the Examiner. Chang et al. provides a UV-curable and foamable resin composition suitable for optical article application, as described in column 1, lines 51-53 (emphasis added), and evaluates the specific gravity, the viscosity and the tensile strength (columns 9-10). In other words, Chang et al. discloses a foamable resin composition suitable for use as an optical fiber coating (column 9, line 61), and provides a foamable resin composition

having satisfactory strength for optical fiber application (column 10, lines 23-24). One having ordinary skill in the art would not have had any reason to combine the foamable composition of Chang et al. having high strength with the blowing agent and the method of Mauk et al. to achieve the presently claimed process.

Furthermore, even if one having ordinary skill in the art did combine the references in the manner suggested by the Examiner, the results achieved would be completely unexpected. As discussed above, the claimed method permits the recited levels of mean light reflectance to be achieved. Nothing in the prior art would lead one having ordinary skill in the art to expect this result, which is specifically recited in the claims.

Additionally, a number of other unexpected advantages would be obtained. For example, the claimed method allows the production of a light reflector that has microcells, is thin and has high reflection efficiency as well as satisfactory workability, productivity and formability, as described on page 3, paragraph [0027], of the specification. Therefore, evaluations on the whiteness, opacity, light reflection spectrum and light transmission spectrum of the resulting foam (page 14, paragraph [0174] can be made. These results could not have been expected in light of the cited prior art.

The process recited in present claim 1 provides still further unexpected advantages, including production of a foam sheet having a cell diameter on the sub-micron order; a thickness of the sheet is 50 μm or less having high reflectance, high whiteness and high masking properties (page 12, lines 1-8 of paragraph [0141]). In addition the resulting foam films transmit and reflect light by selecting specific wavelength components (page 12, lines 1-5 of paragraph [0143]).

All of the foregoing unexpected results strongly support the nonobviousness of the present claims over the cited references. Thus, claim 1, as well as claims 3, 4, 6, and 7, which depend on claim 1, cannot be obvious over these references.

In view of the amendments and comments presented above, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

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CONCLUSION

Applicants submit that all claims are in condition for allowance. However, should there be any questions concerning this application, the Examiner is respectfully invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number appearing below.

Respectfully submitted,

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